

Remarks/Argument

Claim Summary

By this Amendment, claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 9, 10 and 11 have been revised, and claims 3, 7-8 and 13-15 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer of their subject matter.

Claims 1-2, 4-6 and 9-13 remain pending in the application.

35 U.S.C. ¶112, second paragraph

By this Amendment, the claims have been revised to correct each of the informalities identified by the Examiner.

35 U.S.C. ¶102 and ¶103

Claims 1-6 and 9-13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. ¶102 or ¶103 as being unpatentable over Kim et al. (US 5990016), taken alone or in combination with Strang (US 6872259) and Omstead et al. (US 6692575). Applicants respectively traverse these rejections with respect to the now pending claims.

By this Amendment, independent claims 1 and 6 have been revised to more clearly recite, for example, features of the embodiment illustrated in FIG. 11a of the present application.

As shown in the example of FIG. 11a, the upper electrode 16 includes an electrode plate 30a and a plurality of nozzles 32 integral therewith. One nozzle 32 is disposed at the center of the electrode plate 32a, and the remainder of the nozzles 32 are disposed in a plurality of concentric groups about the central nozzle 32. The nozzles 32 in each group are spaced apart from one another by equal amounts. Also, the nozzles 32 are disposed more densely at an outer peripheral portion of the electrode plate 30a than at a central portion of the electrode plate 30a. The intervals (d , $f(d)$, $f(d')$, ...) between the central nozzle 32 or nozzles 32 in any one group, and closest nozzles 32 in the adjacent group decrease in the radial direction, i.e., in a

direction from the center of the electrode plate 30a toward the outer peripheral edge portion thereof.

Applicant's respectfully content that Kim et al., Strang and Omstead et al., taken individually or in combination, do not teach or suggest the above-discussed features of independent claims 1 and 9. For at least these reasons, Applicants further contend that claims 1-2, 4-6 and 9-13 define over the prior art.

Conclusion

No other issues remaining, reconsideration and favorable action upon the claims 1-2, 4-6 and 9-13 now pending in the application are requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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